



NOTE TO EDITORS

VISIT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Addis Ababa, 1 November 2017: On 30 and 31 October 2017, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, undertook an official visit to the Republic of South Africa. The purpose of the visit was to consult the South African Government on a range of issues that are at the heart of African Union priorities, including Agenda 2063, efforts underway to resolve crises and conflict situations affecting the continent, economic integration, science and innovation, as well as the Union's institutional reform process.

On 30 October, the Chairperson of the Commission and the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, accompanied by their respective delegations, had a three-hour working session at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation. They agreed on the need for renewed and co-ordinated African-led efforts to assist African countries facing peace and security challenges. They stressed that African ownership and leadership was key to finding sustainable solutions. In this regard, the Chairperson of the Commission thanked the Government of South Africa for its contribution to the African Union Peace Fund, as part

of the June 2015 Summit decision committing Member States to finance up to 25% of the Union's peace and security agenda.

Discussions with Minister Nkoana-Mashabane also touched on the Continental Free Trade Area and the Single African Air Transport Market, as provided for in the Yamoussoukro Declaration; both initiatives are Flagship Projects of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063. Negotiations on the agreement establishing the CFTA are at an advanced stage, and the aim is to conclude them by December 2017. The Chairperson of the Commission commended South Africa for its role in advancing continental integration, through support to the CFTA, and emphasized the need for continued support to help make the CFTA a reality. On the issue of air transport, it was agreed that the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Declaration on the Single African Air Transport Market should be expedited. The Chairperson emphasized the important role that South Africa can play, as Chair of the Ministerial Working Group for the establishment of the Single Air Market.

The Chairperson of the Commission took advantage of his visit to encourage the signing and ratification of outstanding African Union instruments, most notably those relating to the establishment of the continental financial institutions and the African Charter on Statistics. The Minister undertook to look into this matter.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane hosted a dinner in honour of the Chairperson of the Commission, attended by the African diplomatic corps and South African officials.

On 31 October, the Chairperson of the Commission was received by President Jacob Zuma. They exchanged views on economic integration, including the important role of NEPAD, the African Union institutional reforms and a number of conflict and security

issues. They underlined the importance of Africa's leadership in providing sustainable solutions to the continent's peace and security challenges. President Zuma pledged South Africa's full support to the Chairperson and the Commission as they take forward the African agenda. They discussed Africa's partnerships, including the forthcoming African Union-European Union Summit in Abidjan, to be held in accordance with the relevant AU decisions.

The Chairperson commended South Africa for its strong Pan-African commitment. He was particularly pleased to visit in 2017, the year marking the centenary of Oliver Tambo. He looked forward to the celebration of the centenary of Nelson Mandela in 2018.

The Chairperson of the Commission also took advantage of his visit to meet with the various South-Africa based African Union institutions. South Africa hosts the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the Pan-African Parliament, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Commission for Nuclear Energy, the African Union Foundation, the Africa Risk Capacity, and the Pan-African Women's Organization. The Pan-African University's Space Sciences Institute will also be based in South Africa.

In addition to the Chairperson's various engagements, members of the Commission's delegation and officials from the South African Departments of Science and Technology and International Relations and Cooperation held consultations on how to expedite the establishment of the Pan-African University's Space Sciences Institute, including the finalisation and signature of the Host Agreement. It should be noted that the Pan-African University is one of the Flagship Projects of Agenda 2063.

Finally, the Chairperson of the Commission visited the Freedom Park Heritage Museum in Salvokop, Pretoria.

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Visit of the Chairperson of the African union Commission to the Republic of South Africa, Addis Ababa, 1 November 2017

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